

BOOK TALK

A Playful Tiger Cub

Ramesh Bedi



Rosy is a playful tiger cub, whose mother had succumbed to a poacher's bullets in the TERAI region of Nepal in the 1960s. Three month old cub had been rescued by Major Willie, who on being refused permission to take the cub back with him to Australia, handed it over to the then Director of the Delhi Zoo, Mr. Narayan Datta Bachkheti.

It is at Bachkheti's place, within the precincts of the Delhi zoo, that a wildlife photographer Ramesh Bedi and his then school-going son, Naresh shot these lovely pictures of a tiger cub taking to life in the confines of a loving home, like a duck

takes to water. The Bachkhetis nursed Rosy like a mother, would-right from giving him his early bottle feeds, which resulted in this strong, affectionate bond between the beast and his adopted family. It is this bond of untrammelled affection reflected in the eyes of this otherwise ferocious animal that Ramesh and Naresh Bedi have captured through their camera. The pictures taken by them totally captivate the reader. In today's world of colour pictures and video films that bring wildlife into your very drawing-room, for a couple of black and white pictures to have such a terrific effect, says volumes for the picture

compositions—to say nothing of dear Rosy's beloved countenance and playful antics.

The pictures by themselves do speak volumes, but the father and son team has gone on to give first-hand explanations of what the cub had been upto when they shot the pictures. This is interesting additional information, except that one wishes they had taken pains to see that the right pictures went with the right lines. In some cases, like when Ramesh Bedi describes how he tried to photograph Rosy's playfulness with Naresh and his camera, the picture appears two pages later, while there are photographs of Ramesh Bedi and Rosy playing about, facing these lines!

There are photographs of Rosy nuzzling the Bachkhetis dog, of Rosy chasing a beetle, everything in fact that gives us a fair idea of what all Rosy did in a normal day while she was with the Zoo Director's family.

Particularly poignant and touching is the picture of Rosy looking mournfully at the

mounted tiger head, in the Bachkhetis drawing-room.

The authors tell us, that Rosy would often go up to this head, and look pathetically at it for several moments. Remembering a mother he never knew perhaps?

Other pictures that so thrill the heart of any child, are the ones in which Rosy is seen pulling off the drapes on the chairs and sofas in the drawing-room, something he really enjoyed doing!

Well! How much more can one go on describing good pictures? They have to be seen to be believed! In fact, this book (if it is not going to be priced exorbitantly!) could make a lovely gift for a child—what with tigers becoming near extinct, it might do the children of today a lot of good to know that tigers were not merely ferocious beasts that lived in the jungle and which man hunted ruthlessly—but they were also creatures of God who were capable of responding to love and affection in purely human terms!

Vaijayanti Savant Tonpe

A PLAYFUL TIGER CUB is written by Ramesh Bedi, Photos by Naresh Bedi and Ramesh Bedi, Cover photo by Rajesh Bedi Pages 32, Published by Bedi Books, L-6 Rajouri Garden. New Delhi 110 027.